walk me home

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by theawfuledges (abovetheruins)

Summary

You're kidnapped by the Foot Clan on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

Notes

this one's a little hard to tag because you can honestly interpret it however you wish - purely platonic, implications of romance with your favorite turtle, poly!turtles, whatever. enjoy!

You're kidnapped by the Foot Clan on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

Snatched off the street, stuffed in an unmarked van and blindfolded, you quickly lose track of where they're taking you, and your only attempt to glean some information is swiftly discouraged by a fist to your jaw.

You lose track of time from there, the only information available to you restricted to what you can hear, smell, and feel: the astringent scent of chemicals, the voices of your captors barking orders at each other, the cold concrete of the holding cell you're tossed into and the scratch of the rope binding your wrists.

Your jaw hurts, the chill of your makeshift cell sinks into your bones and leaves you shivering, but you're not afraid. Not really. You know the boys will come for you.

And they do. It takes them two days to track you down, and by the time you hear the first notes of chaos and the scrambling of Foot soldiers as they rush to confront the quickly advancing turtles, you're hungry, tired, and so sore you can barely move without wincing.

"In here!" you hear, before the door to your cell is ripped open and hands - familiar, huge and warm - are grasping your shoulders, cupping your elbows, reaching for your wrists to get rid of your binds. "You're alright, angelcakes," Michaelangelo's voice washes over you, his usual exuberance tainted by a nervous undertone that you've never heard from the cheerful turtle. "I've got ya, I've got ya."

Thick fingers reach around your head for the knot of the blindfold, and you blink the tears from your eyes as you're exposed to light for the first time in days. Light, and the very concerned gaze of a certain orange-banded turtle.

"Mikey," you croak, your throat dry as bones from a lack of water. Over his shoulder, you can make out a dimly lit hallway, through which a Foot soldier is unceremoniously tossed before a large shadow fills the doorway. You'd know that silhouette anywhere. "Raph?"

Intimidating as Raphael may be to his enemies, the moment he sees you, his murderous expression shifts to one of desperate concern.

"Are you okay?" He tucks his sais away as he approaches you, but once he sees the bruise spreading along your jaw, his lips curl into a snarl. "They hurt ya?!"

"I'm okay," you try to reassure him, but with your scratchy voice and ragged appearance, you can tell he's not convinced.

"C'mon," he says, bending down to scoop you into his arms. "Leo and Donnie are taking care of the rest. Mikey, lead us out?"

Mikey nods, serious-faced in a way you rarely see him. "I'm on it." He gives you a last lingering look before readying his nunchucks, and then you're being carted through a labyrinth of strange hallways and unfamiliar corridors, too exhausted to pay much attention to anything beyond what you can see from the cradle of Raph's arms.

You feel yourself fading - what little sleep you had managed during your stay with the Foot Clan had been fitful to say the least, and the knowledge that you were finally safe was enough for your body to sink into almost-slumber - and by the time you catch the familiar cadence of Donnie's and Leo's voices echoing down the hall, your exhaustion has caught up with you.

You sleep.

*

The boys are… well, weird around you, for the next few days.

Donnie seems overly invested in your health, his expression troubled whenever you catch him glancing at your bruised jaw or bandaged wrists. Mikey looks at you as though you'll disappear at any given second, and between him and Raph, who doesn't seem to want you out of his sight, you're beginning to feel like you've earned yourself a pair of very committed bodyguards. As for Leo… well, Leo just avoids you altogether.

"They were scared," April tells you when you bring up your concerns to her. She sips at her coffee, and though she'd been nice enough to make you a drink, you're too preoccupied to enjoy it. "They were *really* freaking out when we couldn't find you. We all were."

"But I'm okay," you say, playing with the rim of your cup. You're hyper aware of your bruised wrists and the tender skin along your jaw. "Really."

"We weren't sure that would be the case during those forty-eight hours," April says gently, and you bite your lip, chastened. You know everyone had worried for your safety. You know you might not have ever made it home if the boys hadn't found you when they did.

April reaches across the table to take your hand, squeezing it gently. "Give them some time. They got very close to losing someone important to them. I wouldn't be surprised if they were feeling a little over-protective of you, or even guilty that they couldn't get to you sooner."

Guilty, you think, recalling Donnie's pained expression while he tended to your wounds and the way Leo had been keeping you at arm's length ever since your rescue. Your stomach curdles.

"What do I do?" you ask, lost.

April smiles, her palm warm against the back of your hand. "I think we could all use a bit of reassurance right about now. Start there."

*

You start with Donnie.

He's insisted on changing your bandages daily, and as he's applying a fresh layer of antiseptic to the ligature marks on your wrists, you notice how furrowed his brow has become, and how carefully he's avoiding your gaze while he works.

You also notice how he's saving your jaw for last, and you think you know why. When you'd first been rescued, the bruise from the Foot soldier's punch had been a deep, raw purple. Days later, it's turned a sickly green, and though you know that means it's on the mend, it's still an ugly reminder of your time in captivity.

Donnie's gentle about applying balm to the wound. It doesn't hurt as much as when you'd first received it, but it's still achingly tender, and his face falls when you wince at his touch.

He goes to pull away, uttering apologies, but you don't let him get that far.

"Hey, it's okay," you assure him, reaching for his hand and tucking it back against your cheek. The pressure smarts, but you ignore the ache in your jaw and do your best to give Donnie the most reassuring smile you can muster. "See? I'm fine. It's just a little tender."

Donnie's eyes shutter behind his glasses, but he doesn't pry his hand from your grip. "It could have been so much worse," he frets quietly, and with your conversation with April fresh in your mind, it's easy to see the guilt written across his face.

"But it wasn't," you say simply, your lips curling as he gives you a look.

"But it could have - "

"Donnie," you interrupt gently, giving his hand a squeeze. "I can either be worried about what might have happened, or grateful that I got away. I know which one I'd rather focus on."

He sighs. "You're right," he admits. "I *know* you're right. It's just… hard. Seeing you hurt."

You smile, touched beyond words, and hop off of Donnie's examination table to wrap the lanky turtle in a hug. At first he freezes in the circle of your arms, but only for a moment, before his own wrap securely around your shoulders, his chin settling on the crown of your head.

"Thank you for looking after me," you tell him, hoping the depth of your gratitude can be heard in your voice.

Judging by the soft squeeze he gives you, you're pretty sure he got the message.

*

You spend two weeks in the lair - not hiding, but close enough - before the boys decide it's safer to move you to the farmhouse while they hunt out the remaining Foot soldiers responsible for your capture.

It's an adjustment, in more ways than one. Away from the scents and sounds of the city, you feel like you're able to breathe easier, but it's hard not to feel a little exposed without the turtles around all the time. April and Casey are great company, of course, and you've taken to seeking Splinter's wisdom and guidance whenever you're feeling particularly vulnerable, but you've grown used to the ruckus of the turtles going about their business around you - Raph lifting weights, Donnie typing at his computer, Leo training and Mikey practicing new tricks

on his skateboard. The lair had always been a place of *noise*, of laughter and squabbles, all of it soothed by Master Splinter's steady voice.

In comparison, the farmhouse feels lonely, and far too quiet.

You occupy your time as best you can - with books, with the few channels the ancient television is able to pick up, and with plenty of walks around the isolated grounds.

A storm rolls in a week into your stay, however, and bereft of much else to do, you settle down on the couch in the living room, warming your hands on a mug of hot chocolate and resigning yourself to the silence of an empty house.

Casey and April had headed back into the city for work, and with Splinter elsewhere, meditating with the warm cup of tea you'd made him to ward off the chill, you can admit that you're having trouble coping with the solitude. You'd grown used to it while living alone in such a huge city, but that was before you'd met April and the boys.

You sigh, grabbing the remote to lower the volume of the questionable horror film you'd turned to. With the storm brewing, the boys would probably be staying in the city tonight. The rain had already started in earnest - you can hear drops pelting the house, drumming against the siding and plinking off the gutters.

You can hear voices too.

"Hurry it up, will ya?" It's a whispered plea, nearly drowned out by the rain. "I'm getting soaked here, dude."

"Pipe down, numbskull," grumbles a rougher, noticeably more annoyed voice. "You want to wake the whole house up?"

You grin to yourself, carefully extricating your limbs from your blanket burrito and approaching the front door.

The looks on Mikey's and Raph's faces when you toss open the door would have normally sent you into peals of laughter - rarely do you ever see the pair look so startled - but your concern at their drenched appearance stalls your humor in its tracks. They're absolutely *soaked*.

"Hurry in before you make yourselves sick," you urge them, hurrying to gather towels from the linen closet. "What are you guys even doing here? I thought you'd be staying in the city."

Mikey unsticks himself from the ancient railing of the dilapidated porch to catch the towel you toss his way, the sunny smile on his face a striking contrast to the dismal weather. "Patrol ended early, angelcakes!"

You raise your brow at Raphael, who has the grace to avoid your eyesight. Over his shoulder, you can see the turtle's van parked haphazardly in the front yard. "Is that so?"

"Yeah," he mumbles. You wonder if turtles blush, because in the firelight, Raphael's cheeks look a shade darker than usual. "Quiet night, you know? Thought we'd just… stop by."

“I see,” you return, your lips twitching. You can’t imagine that Leo will be too thrilled with them for skipping out early - or that Donnie will appreciate their hijacking of the van - but you can’t deny that you’re happy to see them.

Mikey’s quick to duck inside as soon as he’s relatively dry, heading straight for the warmth of the fire crackling merrily away in the grate, but Raph lingers in the doorway, his broad shoulders filling the threshold.

“Everything okay, Raph?”

“Yeah, yeah. Jus’ - “ He glances over your shoulder into the depths of the house before meeting your gaze. “We really were just droppin’ by to make sure you were okay, you know? What with the storm and everything.”

“I’m glad you did,” you tell him, the reward for your honesty a beat of flustered surprise on the gruff turtle’s face. “Are you… Will you stay? For a while?”

Raph waffles for a second, his gaze roving from the storm outside, to Mikey already making himself at home, and then to the pleading, expectant look on your face. His sigh of defeat nets him a smile of triumph from you, and you follow merrily behind as Raphael finally ducks inside, reiterating, “Jus’ to make sure you’re alright.”

You wind up in a heap on the floor with the both of them, nestled near the fire to rid them of the damp clinging to their skin, and for the first time in days, you feel centered. Secure.

“You know you can always stop by just because,” you tell them, taking a sip of your nearly forgotten cocoa and making a face at the lukewarm taste. “You don’t need an excuse.”

“Figured you might want a break from us,” Raph admits, rubbing the back of his head. “Bein’ stuck in the lair for so long and all.”

You shoot a glance at Mikey, who nods in agreement. “Not that you could ever get tired of us!” he boasts, though it’s easy enough to catch the uncertainty lurking beneath his bravado. “Right, angelcakes?”

You would laugh if it weren’t for the carefully constructed calm on both of their faces, like they’re bracing for your answer. “Of course I’m not sick of you,” you hurry to assure them, and then you do huff a laugh, but only at yourself. “If anything, I’m sick of *this* - “ You wave your hand at your surroundings, “but only because I’d rather be in the lair with you guys. I feel… better, with you. Braver.”

There’s a beat of silence, and then another. You look up from the murky depths of your cocoa to see Raph watching you with gruff affection plastered across his face, try as he might to hide it. As for Mikey, well - he’s never been one to hide anything, and his eyes are practically sparkling.

“What?” you ask, flustered beneath their gaze.

“Nothin’, nothin’,” Raph deflects, turning his head to hide the quirk of his lips.

“Yeah, yeah, nothin’,” Mikey parrots, though his attempt at solemnity is ruined by the mirth in his eyes. “Just didn’t realize you missed us that much.”

“Well, I do,” you return, taking another sip of your drink to hide whatever look might have stolen across your face. Sincerity with the turtles was easy, but spilling your guts still made your face flush.

Mikey’s eyes twinkle. “Because you *loooove* us,” he practically croons, pursing his lips in imitation of a kiss.

“Shut up,” you snort, reaching for one of the pillows piled on the couch and tossing it at the orange-banded turtle. “You guys knew that already.”

Mikey shares a look with his brother, his grin goofy and sweet. You glance at Raph and spot him wearing a similar look, though it’s tempered beneath the gruff exterior he usually projects.

“‘Course we knew, angelcakes,” Mikey assures you, but there’s no hiding the pleased surprise on his face.

You would just have to remind them more often.

*

Raph and Mikey must have spilled your secret, because after their unexpected visit, you suddenly find the farmhouse always occupied by at least one of the brothers. You feel terrible at first, like you’ve guilted them into it when you know how busy they must be tracking down the Foot Clan, but you can’t deny that you’re happier with their company.

You spend your nights with Raph learning how to knit, having movie marathons with Mikey, and helping Donnie with upgrades around the farmhouse. Leo is the hardest turtle to pin down - you catch glimpses of him on the nights he’s assigned to the farmhouse, but a glimpse is all he affords you.

It’s only by a stroke of luck that you actually manage to catch him alone.

You’re woken by a nightmare, though it’s far from the first one you’ve had since your capture. Two days spent in complete darkness and isolation had taken its toll on you, though you’ve managed to keep that secret from the boys for fear of adding to their guilt.

You find the blue-banded leader in the kitchen, staring pensively down at the table with a slice of leftover pizza sitting untouched before him. He must have been deep in thought - he doesn’t even notice your approach until you say his name.

“Oh, uh - “ You’ve never seen Leonardo so lost for words. “Did I wake you?”

“No, no, I was just - “ You gesture somewhat lamely to the fridge. “Grabbing a drink.”

“Well,” he says awkwardly, rising from the table. “I’ll just… leave you to it.”

“I had a nightmare,” you blurt out, which does a better job at drawing Leo up short than anything else you could have said.

You watch as a battle of emotions plays across his face, until his visage settles into something that looks far too close to shame for your liking.

“About the Foot?” he asks you, resigned, as if he already knows the answer.

“About the dark,” you correct him. At his apparent confusion, you add, “They kept me blindfolded and alone for two days.”

“I - “ He fumbles for a moment. You brace for an apology - the last thing you want - but instead, all Leo asks is, “Is there anything I can do?”

A huge wave of relief goes crashing through you at the words. “Actually, I… I was wondering if you could teach me? How to fight.”

It’s something you’d thought about for a while, even before your kidnapping, though the ease with which the Foot had nabbed you had only cemented your desire to learn. You knew you’d never be on par with the turtles, but all you wanted was the opportunity to protect yourself, should the same situation arise. You couldn’t rely solely on the turtles to keep you safe, after all, and wouldn’t want to, anyway.

You almost expect Leo to refuse, and brace for it, but to your surprise, he nods.

“I could teach you a few basics now, if you - “

“Yes,” you hurry to confirm, smiling when Leo huffs out a small laugh at your enthusiasm. There was little you wouldn’t have agreed to, if it meant prolonging your time with the blue-banded turtle.

The sky is full of stars when you follow him outside, the air crisp and the grass damp with dew.

“We’ll start with a few defensive positions,” Leo tells you, guiding your form with hands roughened by years of sword use. You expected the awkwardness of the past few weeks to bleed into this, too, but the atmosphere is light, the weight of your kidnapping easing from both of your shoulders, and when Leo catches your smile, he returns it with one of his own.

“I should have done this sooner,” he says, and though his voice is far more somber than you’d like, he isn’t hiding from you, or hurrying to escape your sight. You consider that a win.

“I should have asked sooner,” you return, and as he goes to guide your arm, you stop him with a gentle hand on his wrist. “What happened to me wasn’t your fault, Leo. It wasn’t anyone’s fault.”

“I know,” Leo replies, though he doesn’t sound entirely convinced. “But it *is* because of us that you were targeted. If you weren’t important to us - “

“I’m important to you?” You can’t ask without smiling, and Leo sighs out a breath at the look on your face.

“You knew that,” he says quietly.

You squeeze his wrist. “I knew. And I knew you’d come for me. Knew I was safe.”

Leo’s breath deepens, his eyes swimming with emotion. He looks torn, as if he wants to argue, wants to reiterate how the blame should fall on him, but it seems your words have soothed that ache. He clears his throat. “This position can be effective against multiple opponents - “

You grin as he guides your limbs into a new form. Your nightmare seems like a distant memory now, your time with the Foot even more so, but you know that won’t last. The boys’ minds - as well as your own - may have been soothed, but the fear would linger, and it would take more than words, more than the easing of guilt, to erase it.

But it’s a start.

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